(c) if not, how Government propose to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) As per the 3rd Advance Estimates released on 4th April, 2007, production of pulses during 2006-07 stands at 14.10 million tonnes. Based on the Demand Projections for the Tenth Five Year Plan prepared by a working group of the Planning Commission using normative approach, total consumption of pulses during the year 2006-07 is likely to be 17.71 million tonnes.

(b) and (c) To augment domestic availability, the Government has permitted import of pulses at zero duty. Also, a ban was imposed on export of pulses (except kabuli channa) with effect from June 22, 2006.

In order to increase the production of pulses, a Centrally sponsored "Integrated Scheme on Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Plam and Maize" (ISOPOM) is in place from 01.04.2004. Under the scheme, financial assistances are provided for purchase of breeder seeds, production of foundation seeds, production and distribution of certified seeds, distribution of seed minikits, infrastructure development, block demonstrations on improved technology, integrated pest management and distribution of sprinkler sets.

Weather based insurance

3217. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to offer weather based crop insurance scheme for farmers;

(b) if so, whether the scheme would be operated on an actuarial basis with an element of subsidy;

(c) if so, what would be the component of the subsidy;

(d) in which States the scheme would be implemented and how many small farmers are expected to be covered;

(e) whether it would also cover rainfed farm areas like Rayalaseema region of Andhara Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa; and

(f) how much fund has been earmarked for the scheme and which public sector insurance company has been made the nodal organisation to implement the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes Sir. Union Budget 2007-08 has announced the introduction of Weather (Rainfall) Based Crop Insurance Scheme on pilot basis in 2-3 States;

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The scheme is proposed to be implemented on actuarial basis with an element of upfront subsidy in premium.

(d) and (e) This pilot scheme is proposed to be implemented initially in selected areas and crops of Karnataka and Maharashtra subject to availability of adequate rainfall data and consent of the concerned State. The scheme will cover all types of farmers including small farmers.

(f) A budgetary provision of Rs. 100 crores has been announced in the Union Budget 2007-08 and the Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC) will be the implementing agency for the scheme.

Enhancing productivity

3218. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country may soon become a major foodgrain importer if Government do not initiate immediate steps to boost farm output considering today's level and a situation would emerge by 2020 where India would be a major importer;

(b) whether agriculture performance is an area of deep concern and the Prime Minister has already stressed the need for injecting fresh dynamism in agriculture in order to achieve the overall growth profile;

(c) whether the Ministry has already prepared an action plan for enhancing productivity; and

(d) the steps Government proposed to take to meet the foodgrain shortage?